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ABSTRACT

Research on poor school performance--with emphasis on the nonwhite child--is discussed in terms of differences children bring to school, the school process, and consequences of poor school performance. Individual factors related to poor achievement are noted to include membership in a disadvantaged minority group, broken homes and absent fathers, and negative self image. Factors affecting the school process are reported as organization of the school, academic performance at school, relationships with peers and teachers, and problems of learning disabilities and nonremediation. Examined are such areas as poor achievement, lower self concept, conduct problems, and difficulties in relationships with peers and teachers which are influenced by poor school performance. Also reviewed is the relationship between school failures and decisions to terminate school, juvenile delinquency, use of alcohol and narcotics, aspirations, vocational planning, and suicide. It is concluded that to ameliorate many social and psychological problems, attention must be directed toward helping children perform more adequately in school. (SB)

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POOR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: CONTRIBUTING FACTORS AND CONSEQUENCES, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE NONWHITE CHILD

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The purpose of this paper is to explore the area of poor school performance in children, with emphasis on the nonwhite child. The topic will be considered with reference to (1) differences children bring to school, (2) the school process, and (3) consequences of poor school performance.

The parameters of variance children bring to school include: racial and ethnic membership, socioeconomic status of their family, family patterns, cognitive and affective styles, and attitudes toward self and school.

Those factors affecting the school process include: organization of the school, academic performance at school, relationships with peers and teachers, self-concept and learning disabilities.

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School performance has an impact on: achievement, self-concept, decision to dropout, conduct, social relationships, juvenile delinquency, use of alcohol and narcotics, aspirations, vocational planning and suicide.

DIFFERENCES CHILDREN BRING TO SCHOOL

Children bring to the school setting differences in values, experiences, strengths and vulnerabilities. The variance exists along numerous parameters including racial and ethnic membership, socioeconomic status of their family, family patterns, cognitive and affective styles, and attitudes toward self and school. The school itself provides a very different environment for each child. Many have pointed out that the educational system is merely a microcosm of the sociopolitical world.

Race and Socioeconomic Status

Samuda (1975) commented that when Warner's Index of Status Characteristics were considered and the population divided into social classes on the basis of occupation, income, type of house and dwelling area, no statistical evidence was needed to support the observation that minorities in general, and blacks in particular, are relegated to lower levels on the social scale.

> The traditional black dwelling area is overcrowded and a spatially isolated ghetto, characterized by its run-down and vastly inferior housing, poor public services, inadequate medical facilities and health care, and low quality schools and education. Despite some significant advances over the past few decades, blacks are still concentrated in the low-income sectors of the economy and still form the core of blue collar workers (p. 45).

Samuda felt that blacks, particularly those living in the South, have had a long history of limited educational opportunities. Hauser (1966) stated that the illiteracy rate has declined for blacks from 30.4% in 1910 to 23% in 1960. The rate was three times higher for blacks than for whites (7%). Kinsbourne (1973) stated "School problems result from factors of three types: environmental, emotional, and developmental. The great bulk of illiteracy in this country derives from socioeconomic adversity and cultural alienation that presents a primarily political rather than medical challenge (p. 697)."

Until 1960, white children of elementary and secondary school age attended school in greater proportion and spent more time in school than black children of the same age. By 1971 and 1972, the proportion of blacks attending school had doubled and they were completing more years (Bouvier & Lee, 1974).

Samuda suggested that membership in a minority group had psychological consequences. He stated

> Those effects have been explored extensively: poor self-concept, identity conflicts, submission to white dominance, fear of white competition, high anxiety level, sensitivity to the race of the examiner, poor motivation to achieve, low aspirational levels, fatalistic attitude ... (p. 58).

The cultural deprivation theorists suggest that environments play a major role in developing cognitive processes and learning in general. Some types of environments are seen as more nurturing and stimulating than others. Deutsch & Deutsch (1967) suggested the task for educators of disadvantaged children was to identify stimulation lacks in the environment. Samuda suggested the basic assumption was made that the minority lower class environment lacks those attributes essential to future success in school, and that these attributes are already possessed by the traditional, white, middle-class milieu.

Davis and Havighurst (1946) stated

> ...middle class families place more emphasis on the assumption of responsibility for the self and on individual achievement...are less permissive...permit less free play of the impulses of their children... middle class people train their children early for achievement and responsibility (pp. 707-708).

Rosen (1959) investigated attitudes toward acheivement and social mobility of white Protestants, Jews, Greeks, Italians, French Canadians and blacks. It was found that Jewish, white Protestant, and black children were expected to do things on their own, but that black families were involved in little "achievement" training.

Drews and Teahan (1957) found that high achievers tended to come from homes where their place was defined, where standards were set by parents, and where they were required to obey. Rosen suggested that students from lower class backgrounds seemed to have a lower motivational level and performed less well than students from a higher class.

Hill (1972) refuted the notion that black families are characterized by instability, disintegration, weakness or pathology. According to Hill, black families endorse a work orientation and emphasize achievement and ambition. He stated that the number of low-income black students attending college often equalled or surpassed the number of middle income blacks attending college.

Kapenzi (1972) stated that in order to "make it" in the American educational system, black youth were forced to adopt a different set of standards

> ...which have little or no application to his daily life. This makes it extremely difficult for the average black to receive an education. Coupled with the rising educational requirements for even the most menial jobs, this is now having the effect of locking black Americans into poverty almost permanently (p. 29).

Family Patterns

A higher incidence of broken homes have been indicated in some statistics for minority and lower

socioeconomic families. The research suggests a general trend of children doing more poorly when the father is absent from the home. Lieberman (1974) found that boys who were active in drug use tended to have fathers who were either physically or emotionally absent. For those boys, a male figure (father) was not available with whom to identify.

Jantz and Sciara (1975) stated "research has indicated that the father-absent child performs more poorly in school than the father-present child (p. 468)." They found a significant difference in performance with children living with male heads-of-households, particularly for children with IQ's over 100. Santrock (1972) found children with absent fathers did more poorly on intelligence and academic tests and that the performance was related to the type and onset of father absence. Similar findings were presented by Deutsch and Brown (1964) and Blanchard and Biller (1971). The United States Bureau of Census (1972) reported that in large urban centers, 37% of the black households were headed by females.

Margolin (1965) found maternal unemployment to be significantly associated with learning problems in

emotionally disturbed children. It was hypothesized that the problem was not the working mother per see, but her psychological rejection of the maternal, and often the female role, which had caused her to seek employment.

Self-Concept; Attitudes Toward Self and School

Brown and Renz (1973) suggest a child's concept of self refers to his feelings of self worth and competency. It is the result of a complex interaction between the child and his environment. They stated

> A relatively small percentage of children with... (a cultural deprivation) outlook succeed in school. Coming from a deprived background, generally speaking, the self which the child brings to school does not prepare him for learning in the usual manner (p. 463).

Dimitroff (1969) suggested that because of the negative interactions with school, the child hardened a negative self-image. This works against the mastery of skills and content needed for success.

Brown and Renz suggested that girls from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may face the problem of their physical appearance. This is due to inadequate role models and inadequate funds together with a lack of

knowledge of wise purchasing. They felt that some of these girls might have low self-concepts which in turn led to learning problems, school discipline problems, difficult interpersonal relationships, and termination of school.

Deutsch (1960) suggested that a generally negative self-concept underlies a general syndrome of passivity, depression and fearfulness among black children. Banks and Rompf (1973) commented

> It has been appropriately noted that in the process of socialization, minority children necessarily learn to recognize and perhaps internalize those associations which society makes between minority members and negative attitudes (p. 776).

Clark (1955) and Proshansky and Newton (1957) have also addressed this issue.

Ausubel and Ausubel (1963) felt that the black child assumes an early independence from a home that fails to provide him with the sense of importance and self-esteem he needs. He will seek this among his peers.

Deutsch (1967) wrote

> School experiences can either reinforce invidious self-concepts acquired from the environment, or help to develop or even induce a negative self-concept. Conversely, they can effect positive self-feelings by providing for concrete achievements. The evidence leads us to the inescapable conclusion, that, by the time they enter school, many disadvantaged

> children have developed negative self-images, which the school does little to mitigate (p. 35).

Trowbridge (1972) found higher self-concepts among low socioeconomic status children. Some studies posit lower self-concept with lower socioeconomic status and others see no difference. Coleman (1966), McDaniel (1967), Erickson (1966), and Witty (1967) have explored self-concept and socioeconomic status.

Lecky (1945) was one of the first investigators to demonstrate that low academic achievement was often due to a child's perception of himself as a nonlearner. Walsh (1956), Benjamins (1950), Reeder (1955), and Buckley and Scanlan (1956) have been concerned about self-concept being directly related to intellectual efficiency.

Brookover, et. al. (1965) asserted that each child has his own "concept-of-academic-ability." They wrote

> ...the evaluation one makes of oneself with respect to the ability to achieve in academic tasks in general as compared with others (p. 365)

is what is meant by concept of academic ability.

Wagner (1972) asserted that

> The disadvantaged student might be defined as one who is deficient in many of the skills and kinds of experiences necessary for performance in the prevailing culture in which he lives. Due to an array of factors, he is somewhat different from his classmates, he often has the same potential but his background of poverty and deprivation tend to handicap him under current existing school curricular practices (p. 436).

Hampton (1974) suggested that disadvantaged students included both minorities and majorities. He felt it was crucial to know if they perceived their "disadvantage" as internal or external. He felt that if the disadvantage was perceived to be external, they were more easily able to escape personal responsibility for their situation. He stated that the two most universal characteristics of the academically disadvantaged student were "his paucity of motivation and his generally low level of self-conceptualization(p. 11)."

THE SCHOOL PROCESS

As previously stated, each child brings to the school experience a different background and also various strengths and vulnerabilities. The school is generally recognized as reflecting middle class values. Schools vary, not only in terms of the environments presented to the student, but also in structure and organization. The school process also includes the child's academic progress, relationships with peers and teachers, and problems of learning disabilities and non-remediation.

Organization

Samuda (1975) and Porter (1971) suggest that schools may be interracial without being integrated. Cummings (1975)

commented "Some scholars have referred to the traditional psychological orientation toward race relations in the school as the social pathology model... (p. 237)" Baratz and Baratz (1970) observed that the assumption begins with the notion black children are deviant and defective. Kapenzi (1972) said that segregation was prominent in two forms: "physical segregation by schools and more importantly by culture (p. 29)."

Samuda felt ability grouping works against blacks and minorities in that it leads inevitably to ethnic and socioeconomic separation. He observed

> ...research studies indicate that socioeconomic status is correlated positively with both the scores on intelligence tests and the level of scholastic achievement. Since blacks and other minorities are, as as whole, in the lower socioeconomic bracket, then it follows that ability grouping will have its most potent effect on the learning situations of minority children (p. 107).

Samuda observed that ability grouping works in favor of the bright gifted and talented student.

Samuda also pointed out the overrepresentation of minority students in the lowest ability classes of elementary and secondary schools. Classes for slow learners, the educable mentally retarded, and the mentally retarded contain greater proportions of black and Hispanic students than white students. Dunn (1968)

observed that on the national level, minorities comprised more than 50% of the mentally retarded.

Deutsch (1967) wrote that the typical black school generally devotes an inordinate amount of classroom time (80%) to matters of discipine, disruption and organizational details, thus seriously reducing the amount of time allotted to subject teaching. It was estimated that children in these schools receive one-half to one-third the exposure to learning that their white counterparts receive. Black schools are also characterized by unusually high turnover rates of teachers, as Becker's study of the career patterns of Chicago public school teachers illustrates (Cloward and Jones, 1963, p. 191).

Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) suggest that when a minority child is believed to be and is looked upon as being intellectually inferior, unable to learn or function at the same academic level as other children, he becomes intellectually inferior. Support is given for the self-fulfilling prophecy. Proshansky and Newton (1968) reported a study conducted by Brown (1967) suggesting black children, more than their white counterparts, believed their teachers perceived them negatively (p. 210).

Academic Performance at School

Samuda suggested that practice on tests and in test-taking situations negatively reinforces low socioeconomic group members, and minority group members specifically. "Inappropriate curricula and repeated failures at school and on tests have resulted in discouragement, anxiety, fear and diminished motivation to learn and work hard (p. 87)." Eells, et. al. (1951) state "To the average lower-class child...a test is just another place to be punished, to have one's weaknesses shown up, to be reminded that one is at the tail end of the procession (p. 21)."

Katz (1968) observed that the best motivation and performance occurs, regardless of racial conditions, when subjects are told they have a slightly better-than-even chance of succeeding. Interest is lost if they perceive their chances of success as very high or very low.

Samuda further stated

> Acting singly or in combination, various factors have been recognized to heighten test anxiety. They are: a strong achievement need, fear of failure or punishment, deflated self-concept and inferiority feelings, negatively reinforcing experiences with school examination and tests, hostile test-center environment, and unfamilarity with testing procedures and test taking skills (p. 89).

Samuda felt that minority members are more prone to such anxiety. This has also been suggested by Hawkes and Furst (1971) and Sarason and his collegues (1952, 1958).

Quandt (1973) wrote "research suggests a positive relationship between reading and self-concept...building a good self-concept has a positive effect on the child's ability to read (p. 439)." Research indicating a significant positive correlation between reading and self-concept has been conducted by Williams and Cole (1968), Carlton (1964), Henderson and Long (1966) and Lovinger (1967).

Lovinger (1967) and Carlton and Moore (1965) investigated gain scores in reading with self-concept. They did not find a significant correlation between improvement in reading and improved self-concept. Williams (1973) found no significant correlation between reading achievement and self-concept in first graders. He hypothesized that one explanation was that children had not internalized the value in being a good reader at that age, and that it was more predictive as a factor involving self-concept later.

Cole (1974) found that with average third grade youngsters there was a low positive coefficient for self-concept and achievement motivation in reading language, and math, but not spelling.

Wright (1974) considered learning problems in third graders and found that up to 51% of the boys referred out of the 932 subjects (referred for being conduct problems) could have been identified as having a learning disability. He found that "97.8% of the sample had one or more deficits or borderline deficits as measured by the Wepman, Graham Kendall, and Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Ability (p. 334)."

According to Blom (1969)

> Academic performance and learning are together but one general aspect of personality functioning. When there are broad or narrow deficiencies in academic performance, there are usually associated disturbances in other areas of the child's development--social with peers and adults, body and motor skills, age-appropriate hobbies and interests, dealing with the reality demands of the world, the control and expression of drives and affects, and self-esteem (p. 319).

Mulligan wrote

> The HEW study indicated that in 1969 there were 51,000,000 children in the United States and 8,000,000 of them had a learning disability. ...the publication further points out that in the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the prisoners have a nonverbal IQ of 102, yet the overall educational level is only 7.2 years. Studies indicate that 75% of juvenile delinquents are significantly retarded in reading.

Mulligan further observed that it cost the state of California approximately $6,935 to maintain a man in a prison and that the initial cost of commitment was estimated at $6,250. The amount (average) per child was $696 for education.

Relationships with Peers and Teachers

Kratoville (1969) observed "it is a sad but indisputable fact that children with learning disabilities often suffer the additional handicap of a social deficit. They may earnestly seek peer relationships and then, having endured rebuffs, if not downright cruelty, retreat to the safety of home, family, and their own company (p. 27)."

Kinsbourne (1973) felt that children who were hyperactive didn't like themselves much. "They seem sullen, detached, alienated, they have few friends, and their peers don't like them. They are socially maladjusted. There are plenty of cumulative social reasons for that (p. 709)."

Brown and Renz (1973) suggested the implication in the literature on self-concept in adolescence and behavior seemed to be

> that if the self-concept could be improved, then peer acceptance, teacher approval, behaviors perceived by the school as nonacceptable, and academic progress could be improved (p. 467).

Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) suggested that the teacher's expectations play a big part in a student's sense of worthiness and in his hope to succeed. Coleman, et. al (1968) in a school report stated that the quality of the teacher in the classroom was a more important factor than any other, including classroom physical environment, teaching technique or materials available. Trubowitz (1968) felt that a successful teacher must convince the children of their ability to achieve.

Bryan (1974) observed task-oriented and social behavior of learning disabled and normal children in the classroom. He found that the learning disabled children spent significantly less time engaged in attending behavior for a variety of school subjects and that their interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers were different than for their normal counterparts. He concluded that while the total percentage of time spent interacting with the teacher did not differentiate the learning disabled and normal groups, the number of times the adult responded to a verbal initiation by

the child did. The teacher was almost three times as likely to respond to the normal child as the learning disabled child. The learning disabled child was also more likely to be ignored by peers. Bryan found that learning disabilities teachers and classes had a positive effect on the learning disabled child. The author concluded that learning disabled children apparently have experiences in school which are considerably different from those experienced by average achievers. Schulman, Kaspar and Throne (1965) suggested that the learning disabled child may develop a generalized habit of nonresponding.

Harris (1955) contended that socially ineffective and inefficient life styles reflect attitudes of lower social responsibility. Brown and Richard (1972) found similar results and stated "it seems apparent that children who are identified by peers and teachers as having social relationship problems also have poor attitudes about themselves and their responsibilities to social groups (p. 54)." They concluded the high positive correlation between self-concept and social responsibility supports the interdependence of a person's feelings about himself and his ability to interact with others in a successful manner.

Wright (1974) observed

> by defination, children with specific learning disabilities have central processing dysfunctions which interfere directly with certain types of learning. On the other hand, children with behavior disorders may or may not have central processing dysfunctions, and even when they do, the dysfunction may not be directly related to the learning problem (p. 331).

Bryan went on to state "it is of great importance to examine the impact of the environment upon the child and the reciprocal effect of this child upon his environment (1974, p. 27)."

CONSEQUENCES OF POOR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Some of the areas influenced by school performance (poor) already mentioned include: poor achievement, lower self-concept, conduct problems, and difficulties in relationships with peers and teachers. Though a cause and effect relationship would be difficult to establish, school failures also seem to have a connection with decisions to terminate school, juvenile delinquency, use of alcohol and narcotics, aspirations, vocational planning and suicide.

Dropouts

Cangemi and Khan (1973) found that potential school leavers generally show signs of disinterest for school

and schoolwork by demonstrating symptoms such as

> two or three years of academic retardation... difficulty in arithmetic and reading, poor school grades, frequent academic subject failure, and frequent boredom with the curriculum (p. 117).

They felt that instructors who were extreme and inconsistent would hasten the decision of students to quit school.

Tseng (1972) noted that dropouts as a group had parents of lower educational levels and fathers whose occupations could be characterized by lower levels of difficulty, responsibility and prestige. These students received less encouragement regarding school from parents. The students often perceived their relationships with the father not to be fruitful. Fathers were seen as lower in acceptance. They had a tendency to try and avoid the father. Tseng also found that dropouts had a lower level of achievement motivation, lower level of perception regarding occupational prestige, and showed lower occupational strivings.

Hilton (1972) felt that the decision to drop out of school was not reached all at once:

> For most, the decision is long in the making and is rooted in years of unrewarding and unhappy school experiences. The final act is the end of a process which, we suggest, has its beginnings in the elementary school years, at least for many (p. 10).

Fitzsimmons, Leonard and Macunovich (1969) investigated 270 students who had serious performance difficulty in high school or who had dropped out of school. Fifty percent of their sample experienced severe difficulty as early as the second grade. Reading was the most frequent origin of trouble. A "spread" effect took place in that initially the child failed in one or two areas, in in subsequent years the failures "spread" to other areas. They found that by the third grade, "two thirds of the students who would have developed spread patterns in future years had their first failure, and these had their origins in English (p. 139)."

Glick (1972) studied the relationship between early failure in reading and subsequent changes in general and academic self-concept, attitudes toward school, perceived parent behavior and classroom peer relationships. He found that, in general, poor male readers incurred negative consequences while little benefit accrued to good male readers. By contrast, good female readers received praise but no negative consequences befell poor female readers.

Glick concluded

> Such failures are likely to have negative consequences in school in areas such as the self-concept, attitudes

> towards school, peer relations, and family relations...such consequences may contribute favorably or unfavorably to subsequent academic performance, thus generating an on-going system of interdependent relationships between academic performance and the social-emotional domain (p. 253).

He also stated that the results suggest a different socialization pattern for males and females in our society. Male behavior is shaped by negative sanctions for undesirable behavior while female behavior is shaped by positive sanctions for desirable behavior. He further elaborates

> There is further need for documentation of the ways in which the school, family and community social systems respond differently to patterns of academic success and failure among males and females and what the consequences of those responses are for the total development of the child (p. 257).

Juvenile Delinquency

According to Senna, Rathus, and Siegel (1974) many social theorists contend that there is a relationship between the academic experience and delinquency among juveniles but the nature of this relationship and the role of causality have remained unclear.

Toby (1967) found that those who were academically successful were less likely to engage in delinquent behavior. The suggestion was that educational accomplishments might serve to reduce the incidence of delinquence.

Gold (1970), Polk and Schafer (1972) and Schafer and Polk (1967) contend that poor school performance is closely associated with greater male delinquency and that delinquency serves as an alternative for adequate school performance in American cities because it earns adolescent peer acceptance.

Frease (1972) found an inverse relationship between attitudes toward the school and the incidence of delinquent behavior and between achievement in the school and the incidence of delinquency among urban youth. He stated that delinquent youth are more likely to possess negative attitudes toward school personnel and to exhibit poor academic performance.

Senna, Rathus, and Siegel also investigated the relationship between delinquent behavior and academic investment among suburban youth. In contrast to earlier research carried out primarily with lower class urban youth, the suburban youth appear less likely to become socialized into broad inclusive patterns of delinquency. The relationship between delinquent behavior and school performance appeared to be largely situation specific, although there was some general trend for delinquent behavior to vary negatively with school performance.

Rathus and Siegel (1973) found that the self-esteem for many delinquents was largely dependent upon the derogation of those who served in reciprocal role relationships with them. If they cared about those who labeled them, there was more chance for loss of self-esteem.

Pontius (1972) and others (Teuber, 1964; Milner, 1963) have hypothesized frontal lobe dysfunction due to a developmental lag, and/or neuropathological deficit, as the basis for some form of delinquency especially among juveniles. The individual has the cognitive knowledge that his actions are wrong, yet he cannot change.

Use of Alcohol and Narcotics

Lieberman found in studying drug users, that the boys in her sample tended to have a physically or emotionally absent father and came from unstable family backgrounds. Fifty-four percent of the group had career goals including college.

Nelson, Kraft and Fielding (1974) surveyed the knowledge, attitudes, and patterns of drug use by

young people from poverty and primarily minority backgrounds who were in the Job Corps. They found that the prevalence of drug use was no higher than that reported in many high school and colleges. They also found that there was a low base of knowledge about drugs. They concluded that the conclusions that poor young people almost inevitably turn to drugs are false.

Zweibelson and Coughlin (1974) investigated drug attitudes of boys in training schools. They found a substantial number of the boys (30%) had fairly strong pro drug attitudes. They had inadequate knowledge of commonly used drugs, how the body reacts to drugs and how the body functions. Leahy, Steffenhagen and Levine (1971) found that 17% of the urban youth and 14% of the rural youth in their sample indicated a willingness to use drugs.

Braxton and Yonker (1973) found that students from very large cities (over half million) scored lower in measured knowledge about drugs than students in cities from 50,000 to 500,000 and than students from small cities (5,000 to 50,000). Students in grade 11 knew more about drugs than students in grades 5-10. No sex

differences were found, but advantaged students knew more about drugs than the disadvantages students. Whites had more drug knowledge than nonwhites.

Mier y Teran, et. al. (1974) found that with female inmates, drug use often began in adolescence. The user group came from primarily unstable families. Deviant behavior emerged from varied social contexts which made adequate socialization difficult.

Aspirations and Vocational Planning

Phillips (1963) investigated self-perceptions and aspirations. He found that upper primary children with somewhat accurate self-perceptions may feel that high academic aspirations may be futile if they belong to the culturally disadvantaged group. The feelings of these children are reinforced by statistics which show that the IQ and academic achievement of culturally disadvantaged youth deteoriates as they progress in school.

Brown and Renz suggested that the adolescent ghetto girl who is low academically may have to relinquish her fantasy of a glamorous vocation due to dropping out, pregnancy, poor academics, self-concept, and ideas rooted

in fantasy. The more realistic vocational aspirations are, the greater the chance for success.

Picou, Cosby, Lemke and Azuma (1974) studied occupational choice and perception of attainment blockage in lower class delinquent and non-delinquent black males. They found that occupational aspirations tended to be at a relatively high level. Twenty-seven percent of the delinquent and 24% of the non-delinquent males wanted "glamorous" occupations. A substantial number more of the non-delinquent males aspired to become skilled workers.

> A substantial proportion of all respondants viewed lack of money or lack of educational facilities as hindering their chances for obtaining their occupational goals. Lack of money was the strongest (p. 292).

The greatest disparity between delinquents and non-delinquents concerned opportunities for good jobs in their communities. Fifty-six percent of the delinquents did not think there were good opportunities in their communities while only 24% of the non-delinquents shared that view.

Harrison (1969) suggested that low socioeconomic status negatively affects both occupational aspirations and expectations.

Young (1954) found more dropouts showing interests in the manipulative occupations and fewer expressing interest in the more cognitive occupations.

Crossland (1971) summarized barriers to minority enrollment in college as test barriers, the barrier of poor preparation, the money barrier, the distance barrier, the motivation barrier, and the racial barrier.

Suicide

Corder, Shorr and Corder (1974) and others (Gould, 1964; Motto, 1967; Jacobs and Teicher, 1967; Reese, 1967; and Jacobs, 1971) have investigated suicide and youth. Corder, Shorr, and Corder studied social and psychological characteristics of adolescent suicide attempters in an urban disadvantaged area. They suggest personality variables that in a composite manner might characterize a suicidal group. These include: social isolation, disinterest in the future, feeling helpless in the environment, low communication level with significant others in the environment, lower school involvement and poor impulse control. They further elaborate

> ...many described as hyperactive infants and youngsters and most demonstrated a markedly short attention span.

> All had long histories of poor impulse control manifested by both destructive acting out against the environment and usually by a wide range of self-defeating behaviors. (there was a lack of involvement in school)...they tended to have long records of truancy and verbalized feelings of disinterest or active hostility toward school (pp. 3-5).

SUMMARY

School performance is influenced by not only what happens while the child is at school, but what he brings with him to school. The disadvantaged nonwhite child seems to be at a greater disadvantage in terms of preparation for school before starting school. Samuda and others have suggested that membership in a minority group has psychological consequences, many of them negative. The majority of researchers seem to feel that children from middle class homes are better prepared to cope with school. Broken homes and absent fathers provides an additional handicapping condition for the child.

School performance seems to be influenced also by a child's self-concept and feelings of adequacy as a student. If the child develops a negative self-image it works against the mastery of skills and content needed for success and a vicious cycle begins.

Schools vary considerably and researchers have suggested that the traditional lower class black school spends inordinate amounts of time on discipline and organizational details thus reducing by one-half or two-thirds the amount of time for teaching. These schools are often characterized by unusually high turnover rates of teachers.

Writers seem to feel that ability grouping works against lower class and minority students. It segregates and isolates them from the mainstream. Many have also observed the disproportinate number of minority children in classes for the retarded. Dunn observed that on the national level, minorities comprised more than 50% of the mentally retarded. Ability grouping seems to be of most benefit to the gifted and talented students.

The area of testing with minority children has been widely discussed. The nonwhite child and lower class white child seems to door more poorly on tests and these scores have been in essence used against them.

Self-concept and academic performance seem related, although there is a good deal of conflicting research. There seems to be little doubt that reading ability is crucial in school performance and thus has a direct relationship to school self-concept. By the time the child reaches third grade, reading seems to have been internalized as a value, and the child is very cognizant of strengths and weaknesses in that area.

Glick observed that we tend to shape behavior in male and female students differently--male school performance is subject to negative feedback while female school performance tends to be shaped more by praise.

Relationships have been cited between learning problems and conduct problems--with many children who exhibit behavior disorders also having a learning disability.

One's performance in school seems to affect one's relationships with both peers and teachers. The child with problems seems to do less well in relationships with others whose responses may vary from indifference to open hostility and rejection. One outcome of this is sometimes a lower sense of social responsibility on the part of the handicapped child.

Students who ultimately dropout of school have generally had patterns of poor performance and difficulty in school. The decision is not made all at once, but is the final act of a frustrating process that may have gone on for years. A "spread" effect has been observed--the child initially fails in one or two areas and later this spreads to more areas.

Many juvenile delinquents have histories of poor school performance. Successful involvement with school seems to discourage delinquency. Many delinquents turn to peer groups for the acceptance and status they cannot find elsewhere. Suburban delinquents seem less likely to become socialized into broad inclusive patterns of delinquency than poor urban youth. Some research has been conducted linking frontal lobe dysfunction and some form of delinquency, especially among juveniles.

Adolescents in general seem to have a low base of knowledge about drugs and their effects on the body. Those youth faring more poorly in knowledge were ones from large urban areas, nonwhites, and disadvantaged students. Drug users often come from unstable families and seem to have more difficulty with adequate socialization.

Research suggests that lower class and minority group membership may be a handicap in vocational aspirations. It appears that some of these youth have unrealistic aspirations and expectations which ultimately may work against them. It seems that many have fantasy ideas of "glamorous" occupations which may be unrealistic in attainment. The delinquent sample in one study felt that there were fewer good job opportunities in their community than did the non-delinquent group.

Minority students encounter barriers to college such as test scores, poor school preparation, lack of money, long distance, poor motivation and racial status.

Histories of suicidal youth often suggest an individual who has been a social isolate, has been disinterested in the future, had low communication levels with significant others in the environment, lower school involvement, truancy, and poor impulse control.

It seems crucial in attempting to ameliorate many other social and psychological problems, focus needs to be directed toward helping children perform more adequately in school. The consequences of non-remediation are negative and strong. School performance is an impressive determiner of later social, economic and political status.

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